

# A GEOMETRIC HAMILTON-JACOBI THEORY FOR CLASSICAL FIELD THEORIES

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ABSTRACT. In this paper we extend the geometric formalism of the Hamilton-Jacobi theory for hamiltonian mechanics to the case of classical field theories in the framework of multisymplectic geometry and Ehresmann connections.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The standard formulation of the Hamilton-Jacobi problem is to find a function  $S(t, q^A)$  (called the **principal function**) such that

$$\frac{\partial S}{\partial t} + H(q^A, \frac{\partial S}{\partial q^A}) = 0. \quad (1.1)$$

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<sup>1</sup>**To Prof. Demeter Krupka in his 65th birthday**

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If we put  $S(t, q^A) = W(q^A) - tE$ , where  $E$  is a constant, then  $W$  satisfies

$$H(q^A, \frac{\partial W}{\partial q^A}) = E; \quad (1.2)$$

$W$  is called the **characteristic function**.

Equations (1.1) and (1.2) are indistinctly referred as the **Hamilton-Jacobi equation**.

There are some recent attempts to extend this theory for classical field theories in the framework of the so-called multisymplectic formalism [15, 16]. For a classical field theory the hamiltonian is a function  $H = H(x^\mu, y^i, p_i^\mu)$ , where  $(x^\mu)$  are coordinates in the space-time,  $(y^i)$  represent the field coordinates, and  $(p_i^\mu)$  are the conjugate momenta.

In this context, the Hamilton-Jacobi equation is [17]

$$\frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + H(x^\nu, y^i, \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial y^i}) = 0 \quad (1.3)$$

where  $S^\mu = S^\mu(x^\nu, y^j)$ .

In this paper we introduce a geometric version for the Hamilton-Jacobi theory based in two facts: (1) the recent geometric description for Hamiltonian mechanics developed in [6] (see [8] for the case of nonholonomic mechanics); (2) the multisymplectic formalism for classical field theories [3, 4, 5, 7] in terms of Ehresmann connections [9, 10, 11, 12].

We shall also adopt the convention that a repeated index implies summation over the range of the index.

## 2. A GEOMETRIC HAMILTON-JACOBI THEORY FOR HAMILTONIAN MECHANICS

First of all, we give a geometric version of the standard Hamilton-Jacobi theory which will be useful in the sequel.

Let  $Q$  be the configuration manifold, and  $T^*Q$  its cotangent bundle equipped with the canonical symplectic form

$$\omega_Q = dq^A \wedge dp_A$$

where  $(q^A)$  are coordinates in  $Q$  and  $(q^A, p_A)$  are the induced ones in  $T^*Q$ .

Let  $H : T^*Q \longrightarrow \mathbb{R}$  a hamiltonian function and  $X_H$  the corresponding hamiltonian vector field:

$$i_{X_H} \omega_Q = dH$$

The integral curves of  $X_H$ ,  $(q^A(t), p_A(t))$ , satisfy the Hamilton equations:

$$\frac{dq^A}{dt} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_A}, \quad \frac{dp_A}{dt} = -\frac{\partial H}{\partial q^A}$$

**Theorem 2.1** (Hamilton-Jacobi Theorem). *Let  $\lambda$  be a closed 1-form on  $Q$  (that is,  $d\lambda = 0$  and, locally  $\lambda = dW$ ). Then, the following conditions are equivalent:*

(i) *If  $\sigma : I \rightarrow Q$  satisfies the equation*

$$\frac{dq^A}{dt} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_A}$$

*then  $\lambda \circ \sigma$  is a solution of the Hamilton equations;*

(ii)  $d(H \circ \lambda) = 0$ .

To go further in this analysis, define a vector field on  $Q$ :

$$X_H^\lambda = T\pi_Q \circ X_H \circ \lambda$$

as we can see in the following diagram:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} T^*Q & \xrightarrow{X_H} & T(T^*Q) \\ \downarrow \pi_Q & & \downarrow T\pi_Q \\ Q & \xrightarrow{X_H^\lambda} & TQ \end{array}$$

$\lambda$  (curved arrow from  $Q$  to  $T^*Q$ )

Notice that the following conditions are equivalent:

(i) If  $\sigma : I \rightarrow Q$  satisfies the equation

$$\frac{dq^A}{dt} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_A}$$

*then  $\lambda \circ \sigma$  is a solution of the Hamilton equations;*

(i)' If  $\sigma : I \rightarrow Q$  is an integral curve of  $X_H^\lambda$ , then  $\lambda \circ \sigma$  is an integral curve of  $X_H$ ;

(i)''  $X_H$  and  $X_H^\lambda$  are  $\lambda$ -related, i.e.

$$T\lambda(X_H^\lambda) = X_H \circ \lambda$$

so that the above theorem can be stated as follows:

**Theorem 2.2** (Hamilton-Jacobi Theorem). *Let  $\lambda$  be a closed 1-form on  $Q$ . Then, the following conditions are equivalent:*

(i)  $X_H^\lambda$  and  $X_H$  are  $\lambda$ -related;

(ii)  $d(H \circ \lambda) = 0$ .

### 3. THE MULTISYMPLECTIC FORMALISM

**3.1. Multisymplectic bundles.** The configuration manifold in Mechanics is substituted by a fibred manifold

$$\pi : E \longrightarrow M$$

such that

- (i)  $\dim M = n$ ,  $\dim E = n + m$
- (ii)  $M$  is endowed with a volume form  $\eta$ .

We can choose fibred coordinates  $(x^\mu, y^i)$  such that

$$\eta = dx^1 \wedge \cdots \wedge dx^n .$$

We will use the following useful notations:

$$\begin{aligned} d^n x &= dx^1 \wedge \cdots \wedge dx^n \\ d^{n-1} x^\mu &= i_{\frac{\partial}{\partial x^\mu}} d^n x . \end{aligned}$$

Denote by  $V\pi = \ker T\pi$  the vertical bundle of  $\pi$ , that is, their elements are the tangent vectors to  $E$  which are  $\pi$ -vertical.

Denote by

$$\Pi : \Lambda^n E \longrightarrow E$$

the vector bundle of  $n$ -forms on  $E$ .

The total space  $\Lambda^n E$  is equipped with a canonical  $n$ -form  $\Theta$ :

$$\Theta(\alpha)(X_1, \dots, X_n) = \alpha(e)(T\Pi(X_1), \dots, T\Pi(X_n))$$

where  $X_1, \dots, X_n \in T_\alpha(\Lambda^n E)$  and  $\alpha$  is an  $n$ -form at  $e \in E$ .

The  $(n+1)$ -form

$$\Omega = -d\Theta ,$$

is called the canonical multisymplectic form on  $\Lambda^n E$ .

Denote by  $\Lambda_r^n E$  the bundle of  $r$ -semibasic  $n$ -forms on  $E$ , say

$$\Lambda_r^n E = \{ \alpha \in \Lambda^n E \mid i_{v_1 \wedge \dots \wedge v_r} \alpha = 0, \text{ whenever } v_1, \dots, v_r \text{ are } \pi\text{-vertical} \}$$

Since  $\Lambda_r^n E$  is a submanifold of  $\Lambda^n E$  it is equipped with a multisymplectic form  $\Omega_r$ , which is just the restriction of  $\Omega$ .

Two bundles of semibasic forms play an special role:  $\Lambda_1^n E$  and  $\Lambda_2^n E$ . The elements of these spaces have the following local expressions:

$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda_1^n E &: p_0 d^n x \\ \Lambda_2^n E &: p_0 d^n x + p_i^\mu dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu . \end{aligned}$$

which permits to introduce local coordinates  $(x^\mu, y^i, p_0)$  and  $(x^\mu, y^i, p_0, p_i^\mu)$  in  $\Lambda_1^n E$  and  $\Lambda_2^n E$ , respectively.

Since  $\Lambda_1^n E$  is a vector subbundle of  $\Lambda_2^n E$  over  $E$ , we can obtain the quotient vector space denoted by  $J^1\pi^*$  which completes the following exact sequence of vector bundles:

$$0 \longrightarrow \Lambda_1^n E \longrightarrow \Lambda_2^n E \longrightarrow J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow 0 .$$

We denote by  $\pi_{1,0} : J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow E$  and  $\pi_1 : J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow M$  the induced fibrations.

**3.2. Ehresmann Connections in the fibration**  $\pi_1 : J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow M$ . A **connection** (in the sense of Ehresmann) in  $\pi_1$  is a horizontal sub-bundle  $\mathbf{H}$  which is complementary to  $V\pi_1$ ; namely,

$$T(J^1\pi^*) = \mathbf{H} \oplus V\pi_1$$

where  $V\pi_1 = \ker T\pi_1$  is the vertical bundle of  $\pi_1$ . Thus, we have:

- (i) there exists a (unique) horizontal lift of every tangent vector to  $M$ ;
- (ii) in fibred coordinates  $(x^\mu, y^i, p_i^\mu)$  on  $J^1\pi^*$ , then

$$V\pi_1 = \text{span} \left\{ \frac{\partial}{\partial y^i}, \frac{\partial}{\partial p_i^\mu} \right\}, \mathbf{H} = \text{span} \{ \mathbf{H}_\mu \},$$

where  $\mathbf{H}_\mu$  is the horizontal lift of  $\frac{\partial}{\partial x^\mu}$ .

- (iii) there is a horizontal projector  $\mathbf{h} : TJ^*\pi \longrightarrow \mathbf{H}$ .

**3.3. Hamiltonian sections.** Consider a hamiltonian section

$$h : J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow \Lambda_2^n E$$

of the canonical projection  $\mu : \Lambda_2^n E \longrightarrow J^1\pi^*$  which in local coordinates read as

$$h(x^\mu, y^i, p_i^\mu) = (x^\mu, y^i, -H(x, y, p), p_i^\mu).$$

Denote by  $\Omega_h = h^*\Omega_2$ , where  $\Omega_2$  is the multisymplectic form on  $\Lambda_2^n E$ .

The field equations can be written as follows:

$$i_{\mathbf{h}} \Omega_h = (n-1) \Omega_h, \quad (3.1)$$

where  $\mathbf{h}$  denotes the horizontal projection of an Ehresmann connection in the fibred manifold  $\pi_1 : J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow M$ .

The local expressions of  $\Omega_2$  and  $\Omega_h$  are:

$$\begin{aligned} \Omega_2 &= -d(p_0 d^n x + p_i^\mu dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu) \\ \Omega_h &= -d(-H d^n x + p_i^\mu dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu). \end{aligned}$$

**3.4. The field equations.** Next, we go back to the Equation (3.1).

The horizontal subspaces are locally spanned by the local vector fields

$$H_\mu = \mathbf{h}\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x^\mu}\right) = \frac{\partial}{\partial x^\mu} + \Gamma_\mu^i \frac{\partial}{\partial y^i} + (\Gamma_\mu)^\nu_j \frac{\partial}{\partial p_j^\nu},$$

where  $\Gamma_\mu^i$  and  $(\Gamma_\mu)^\nu_j$  are the Christoffel components of the connection.

Assume that  $\tau$  is an integral section of  $\mathbf{h}$ ; this means that  $\tau : M \longrightarrow J^1\pi^*$  is a local section of the canonical projection  $\pi_1 : J^1\pi^* \longrightarrow M$  such that  $T\tau(x)(T_x M) = \mathbf{H}_{\tau(x)}$ , for all  $x \in M$ .

If  $\tau(x^\mu) = (x^\mu, \tau^i(x), \tau_i^\mu(x))$  then the above conditions becomes

$$\frac{\partial \tau^i}{\partial x^\mu} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_i^\mu}, \quad \frac{\partial \tau_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} = -\frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i}$$

which are the Hamilton equations.

#### 4. THE HAMILTON-JACOBI THEORY

Let  $\lambda$  be a 2-semibasic  $n$ -form on  $E$ ; in local coordinates we have

$$\lambda = \lambda_0(x, y) d^n x + \lambda_i^\mu(x, y) dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu .$$

Alternatively, we can see it as a section  $\lambda : E \longrightarrow \Lambda_2^n E$ , and then we have

$$\lambda(x^\mu, y^i) = (x^\mu, y^i, \lambda_0(x, y), \lambda_i^\mu(x, y)) .$$

A direct computation shows that

$$d\lambda = \left( \frac{\partial \lambda_0}{\partial y^i} - \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} \right) dy^i \wedge d^n x + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial y^j} dy^j \wedge dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu .$$

Therefore,  $d\lambda = 0$  if and only if

$$\frac{\partial \lambda_0}{\partial y^i} = \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} \quad (4.1)$$

$$\frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial y^j} = \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\mu}{\partial y^i} . \quad (4.2)$$

Using  $\lambda$  and  $\mathbf{h}$  we construct an induced connection in the fibred manifold  $\pi : E \longrightarrow M$  by defining its horizontal projector as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{h}_e & : T_e E \longrightarrow T_e E \\ \tilde{h}_e(X) & = T\pi_{1,0} \circ h_{(\mu \circ \lambda)(e)} \circ \epsilon(X) \end{aligned}$$

where  $\epsilon(X) \in T_{(\mu \circ \lambda)(e)}(J^1 \pi^*)$  is an arbitrary tangent vector which projects onto  $X$ .

From the above definition we immediately proves that

- (i)  $\tilde{\mathbf{h}}$  is a well-defined connection in the fibration  $\pi : E \longrightarrow M$ .
- (ii) The corresponding horizontal subspaces are locally spanned by

$$\tilde{H}_\mu = \tilde{h}\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x^\mu}\right) = \frac{\partial}{\partial x^\mu} + \Gamma_\mu^i((\mu \circ \lambda)(x, y)) \frac{\partial}{\partial y^i} .$$

The following theorem is the main result of this paper.

**Theorem 4.1.** *Assume that  $\lambda$  is a closed 2-semibasic form on  $E$  and that  $\tilde{h}$  is a flat connection on  $\pi : E \longrightarrow M$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent:*

- (i) *If  $\sigma$  is an integral section of  $\tilde{h}$  then  $\mu \circ \lambda \circ \sigma$  is a solution of the Hamilton equations.*
- (ii) *The  $n$ -form  $h \circ \mu \circ \lambda$  is closed.*

Before to begin with the proof, let us consider some preliminary results.

We have

$$(h \circ \mu \circ \lambda)(x^\mu, y^i) = (x^\mu, y^i, -H(x^\mu, y^i, \lambda_i^\mu(x, y)), \lambda_i^\mu(x, y)) ,$$

that is

$$h \circ \mu \circ \lambda = -H(x^\mu, y^i, \lambda_i^\mu(x, y)) d^n x + \lambda_i^\mu dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu .$$

Notice that  $h \circ \mu \circ \lambda$  is again a 2-semibasic  $n$ -form on  $E$ .

A direct computation shows that

$$\begin{aligned} d(h \circ \mu \circ \lambda) &= - \left( \frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_j^\nu} \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\nu}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} \right) dy^i \wedge d^n x \\ &\quad + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial y^j} dy^j \wedge dy^i \wedge d^{n-1} x^\mu . \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, we have the following result.

**Lemma 4.2.** *Assume  $d\lambda = 0$ ; then*

$$d(h \circ \mu \circ \lambda) = 0$$

*if and only if*

$$\frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_j^\nu} \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\nu}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} = 0 .$$

### Proof of the Theorem

(i)  $\Rightarrow$  (ii)

It should be remarked the meaning of (i).

Assume that

$$\sigma(x^\mu) = (x^\mu, \sigma^i(x))$$

is an integral section of  $\tilde{\mathbf{h}}$ ; then

$$\frac{\partial \sigma^i}{\partial x^\mu} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_i^\mu} .$$

(i) states that in the above conditions,

$$(\mu \circ \lambda \circ \sigma)(x^\mu) = (x^\mu, \sigma^i(x), \bar{\sigma}_j^\nu = \lambda_j^\nu(\sigma(x)))$$

is a solution of the Hamilton equations, that is,

$$\frac{\partial \bar{\sigma}_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} = \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial y^j} \frac{\partial \sigma^j}{\partial x^\mu} = - \frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i} .$$

Assume (i). Then

$$\begin{aligned}
& \frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_j^\nu} \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\nu}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} \\
&= \frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_j^\nu} \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\nu}{\partial y^j} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu}, \quad (\text{since } d\lambda = 0) \\
&= \frac{\partial H}{\partial y^i} + \frac{\partial \sigma^j}{\partial x^\nu} \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\nu}{\partial y^j} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial x^\mu}, \quad (\text{since the first Hamilton equation}) \\
&= 0 \quad (\text{since (i)})
\end{aligned}$$

which implies (ii) by Lemma 4.2.

(ii)  $\Rightarrow$  (i)

Assume that  $d(h \circ \mu \circ \lambda) = 0$ .

Since  $\tilde{h}$  is a flat connection, we may consider an integral section  $\sigma$  of  $\tilde{h}$ . Suppose that

$$\sigma(x^\mu) = (x^\mu, \sigma^i(x)).$$

Then, we have that

$$\frac{\partial \sigma^i}{\partial x^\mu} = \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_i^\mu}.$$

Thus,

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial \bar{\sigma}_j^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} &= \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\mu}{\partial y^i} \frac{\partial \sigma^i}{\partial x^\mu}, \\
&= \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial y^j} \frac{\partial \sigma^i}{\partial x^\mu}, \quad (\text{since } d\lambda = 0) \\
&= \frac{\partial \lambda_j^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + \frac{\partial \lambda_i^\mu}{\partial y^j} \frac{\partial H}{\partial p_i^\mu}, \quad (\text{since the first Hamilton equation}) \\
&= -\frac{\partial H}{\partial y^j}, \quad (\text{since (ii)}). \quad \square
\end{aligned}$$

Assume that  $\lambda = dS$ , where  $S$  is a 1-semibasic  $(n-1)$ -form, say

$$S = S^\mu d^{n-1}x^\mu$$

Therefore, we have

$$\lambda_0 = \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial x^\mu}, \quad \lambda_i^\mu = \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial y^i}$$

and the Hamilton-Jacobi equation has the form

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial y^i} \left( \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + H(x^\nu, y^i, \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial y^i}) \right) = 0.$$

The above equations mean that

$$\frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + H(x^\nu, y^i, \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial y^i}) = f(x^\mu)$$



so that if we put  $\tilde{H} = H - f$  we deduce the standard form of the Hamilton-Jacobi equation (since  $H$  and  $\tilde{H}$  give the same Hamilton equations):

$$\frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial x^\mu} + \tilde{H}(x^\nu, y^i, \frac{\partial S^\mu}{\partial y^i}) = 0 .$$

An alternative geometric approach of the Hamilton-Jacobi theory for Classical Field Theories in a multisymplectic setting was discussed in [15, 16].

## 5. TIME-DEPENDENT MECHANICS

A hamiltonian time-dependent mechanical system corresponds to a classical field theory when the base is  $M = \mathbb{R}$ .

We have the following identification  $\Lambda_2^1 E = T^*E$  and we have local coordinates  $(t, y^i, p_0, p_i)$  and  $(t, y^i, p_i)$  on  $T^*E$  and  $J^1\pi^*$ , respectively. The hamiltonian section is given by

$$h(t, y^i, p_i) = (t, y^i, -H(t, y, p), p_i) ,$$

and therefore we obtain

$$\Omega_h = dH \wedge dt - dp_i \wedge dy^i .$$

If we denote by  $\eta = dt$  the different pull-backs of  $dt$  to the fibred manifolds over  $M$ , we have the following result.

The pair  $(\Omega_h, dt)$  is a cosymplectic structure on  $E$ , that is,  $\Omega_h$  and  $dt$  are closed forms and  $dt \wedge \Omega_h^n = dt \wedge \Omega_h \wedge \cdots \wedge \Omega_h$  is a volume form, where  $\dim E = 2n + 1$ . The Reeb vector field  $\mathcal{R}_h$  of the structure  $(\Omega_h, dt)$  satisfies

$$i_{\mathcal{R}_h} \Omega_h = 0 , \quad i_{\mathcal{R}_h} dt = 1 .$$

The integral curves of  $\mathcal{R}_h$  are just the solutions of the Hamilton equations for  $H$ .

The relation with the multisymplectic approach is the following:

$$\mathbf{h} = \mathcal{R}_h \otimes dt ,$$

or, equivalently,

$$\mathbf{h}(\frac{\partial}{\partial t}) = \mathcal{R}_h .$$

A closed 1-form  $\lambda$  on  $E$  is locally represented by

$$\lambda = \lambda_0 dt + \lambda_i dy^i .$$

Using  $\lambda$  we obtain a vector field on  $E$ :

$$(\mathcal{R}_h)_\lambda = T\pi_{1,0} \circ \mathcal{R}_h \circ \mu \circ \lambda$$

such that the induced connection is

$$\tilde{\mathbf{h}} = (\mathcal{R}_h)_\lambda \otimes dt$$

Therefore, we have the following result.

**Theorem 5.1.** *The following conditions are equivalent:*

- (i)  $(\mathcal{R}_h)_\lambda$  and  $\mathcal{R}_h$  are  $(\mu \circ \lambda)$ -related.
- (ii) The 1-form  $h \circ \mu \circ \lambda$  is closed.

**Remark 5.2.** An equivalent result to Theorem 5.1 was proved in [14] (see Corollary 5 in [14]).  $\diamond$

Now, if

$$\lambda = dS = \frac{\partial S}{\partial t} dt + \frac{\partial S}{\partial y^i} dy^i ,$$

then we obtain the Hamilton-Jacobi equation

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial y^i} \left( \frac{\partial S}{\partial t} + H(t, y^i, \frac{\partial S}{\partial y^i}) \right) = 0 .$$

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